

## **OPENING STATEMENT**

**HON. DAVID WU (D-OR)**

**U.S. House Committee on Science**

**Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Environment, Technology & Standards**

**Hearing: *EPA's FY 2007 Science and Technology Budget Proposal***

**March 16, 2006**

Good morning. Thank you, Chairman Ehlers, for holding this hearing today.

Environmental issues present increasing challenges for us. We all want a robust economy and access to products and services that sustain and improve our quality of life. Through our investments in research and development, we have been able to strike a balance between environmental protection and economic growth.

A clean, healthy environment is not a luxury. It is a necessity. Unfortunately, the Administration has failed for the third consecutive year to offer a budget that will enable us to achieve further successes in environmental protection.

Three years ago, the EPA S&T budget sustained a 5% cut. In FY06, it was reduced again by 2%, and this year's proposal further reduces the budget by 1% under the heading: "Advancing Science and Innovation." This is false advertising. EPA can not advance environmental research if their budget is retreating.

Targets for cuts include programs in mercury contamination, pesticides, ecosystem research, global change and sustainability and the STAR grants program.

I am particularly concerned about proposed cuts to ecosystem research. Research at EPA's Western Ecology Division in Corvallis addresses ecological processes and environmental change in order to best protect and manage ecological resources. We need more of this type of research, not less.

In addition to the budget, I continue to be concerned about another issue important to science at EPA and across the Federal Government. That issue is broadly defined by the term scientific integrity.

I am very disturbed by the continuing reports of manipulation of science advisory committees, suppression of information, and censorship of Federal scientists. These reports are not restricted to one agency or department and they encompass a wide-range of topic areas. Although the Administration claims these events are random, the sheer number and distribution of complaints across the Federal Government suggests an overall political agenda to science.

I am pleased that we have a witness today who will offer some insights into these claims, Mr. Jeff Ruch from Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility - PEER.

I want to welcome our entire distinguished panel to this morning's hearing. I look forward to your testimony and to your recommendations for improving EPA's scientific enterprise.